



THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

FRED LEAF
Chief Operating Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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August 11, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas L. Garthwaite", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **CLOSURE OF ELASTAR COMMUNITY HOSPITAL'S (ELASar)
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

On August 6, 2004, the Licensing and Certification Division of the State Department of Health Services (State DHS) was notified by ELASar Community Hospital (ELASar), formerly Santa Marta Hospital, that the Court had appointed a Chapter 11 Trustee to determine the hospital's future financial viability. On August 9, 2003, the State DHS notified the Department's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency that the hospital was meeting with its employees. At 07:00 on August 10, 2004, the hospital notified the EMS Agency, by telephone, of the hospital's decision to close its emergency department (ED) due to insufficient staffing to cover the ED and other vital clinical services. The EMS Agency immediately placed the hospital on "Internal Disaster", as a mechanism to immediately divert all 9-1-1 traffic away from the hospital. Subsequently, the EMS Agency provided all affected provider agencies, base hospitals and surrounding hospitals with written notification of the closure of ELASar's ED (Attachment I).

As you are aware, the Health and Safety Code requires hospitals to provide such closure notice as soon as possible, but no later than 90 days, of a planned intention to reduce or eliminate emergency services. However, a hospital is not subject to this requirement if the State DHS determines that the use of resources to keep the ED open substantially threatens the stability of the hospital. As such, State DHS authorized the closure of ELASar's ED as a result of its financial insolvency. Subsequently, County Counsel has advised the EMS Agency that the associated Public Hearing and EMS Impact Evaluation are not required and essentially serve no purpose.

Nevertheless, the EMS Agency has prepared a limited evaluation (Attachment II) of the impact that the closure of ELAStar's ED will have on the EMS system. We anticipate that the closure will have a significant negative impact on the surrounding hospitals by increasing the number of visits to the EDs, in particular White Memorial Medical Center (WMH) and East Los Angeles Doctors Hospital (ELA). The EMS Agency has notified both hospitals and advised them of the displacement of ED patients.

ELAStar and ELA are located within a defined service area designated to WMH. 9-1-1 patients within the service area are transported to any of the three hospitals. The combined number of ED treatment bays for the three hospitals is 38, of which ELAStar had 12 (32%). The combined 2003 ED visits for the three hospitals is 70,910, of which ELAStar handled 11,673 (16%). ELAStar received 3,072 (31%) of the total 9-1-1 transports to the three hospitals. As detailed in Attachment II, the closure of ELAStar's ED reduces the number of ED treatment bays by 32%. Walk-in patients may seek care at other hospitals outside WMH's service area.

The EMS Agency does not anticipate a negative impact to the pediatric population transported via 9-1-1 since ELAStar was not an Emergency Department Approved for Pediatrics (EDAP); however, offered prenatal services. Of the fourteen (14) other hospitals within a ten mile radius of ELAStar, thirteen (13) hospitals currently provide prenatal services.

Additionally, the ELAStar Agency does not anticipate that the closure of ELAStar will negatively impact 9-1-1 provider agencies' operations by significantly increasing the length of time to transport patients to WMH or ELA, since these two hospitals are located less than three miles from ELAStar and are within a defined service area. However, provider agencies' operations and patient care may be negatively impacted by increasing the length of time EMS personnel are held at busy emergency departments, waiting for available staff to transfer care.

The hospital has been advised to post appropriate notices to ensure that all reasonable efforts are being taken to properly inform the public. If you have any questions, please contact me at the above number or Carol Meyer, Director of the EMS Agency, at (323) 890-7545.

TLG:rt

Attachments

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director, EMS Agency
EMS Commission
State DHS, Licensing and Certification Division



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES • DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY**

5555 Ferguson Drive, Suite 220
Commerce, CA 90022
(323) 890-7500

Carol Meyer
DIRECTOR

William J. Koenig, M.D., FACEP
MEDICAL DIRECTOR

August 9, 2004

VIA FAX

TO: Distribution

FROM: Carol Gunter
Director

SUBJECT: **ELASTAR COMMUNITY HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT
CLOSURE**

The EMS Agency has received official notification that ELAStar Community Hospital's (ELAStar) emergency department has been closed. Effective immediately, ALL 9-1-1 transports to ELAStar's emergency department are discontinued.

Patients who would have been transported to ELAStar (as part of White Memorial Medical Center's Service Area) must now be transported to White Memorial Medical Center or East Los Angeles Doctors Hospital. All other patients should continue transport to surrounding approved 9-1-1 receiving hospitals as outlined in Reference No. 502, Patient Destination.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please call me at (323) 890-7545 or Richard Tadeo, Chief, Prehospital Care Operations at (323) 890-7576.

CM:rt
08-15

c. Medical Director
Emergency Medical Services Commission
Hospital Licensing Unit, Health Facilities
CEO, ELAStar Community Hospital
CEO, East Los Angeles Community Hospital
CEO, White Memorial Medical Center
CEO, Beverly Hospital
CEO, Monterey Park Hospital
PCC, Beverly Hospital
PCC, LAC+USC Medical Center
PCC, Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital
PCC, St. Francis Medical Center

Medical Alert Center
Hospital Association of Southern California
CEO, American Medical Response
Paramedic Coordinator, American Medical Response
Fire Chief, Los Angeles City Fire Department
EMS Director, Los Angeles City Fire Department
Fire Chief, Los Angeles County Fire Department
EMS Director, Los Angeles County Fire Department
Fire Chief, Montebello Fire Department
Paramedic Coordinator, Montebello Fire Department
Fire Chief, Monterey Park Fire Department
Paramedic Coordinator, Monterey Park Fire Department

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY

ELASTAR COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
Surrounding Facility Volume Report

Hospitals within the designated Service Area	Emergency Department (ED) Beds (Treatment Bays)	% of Treatment Bays in the Service Area	9-1-1 Transports in 2002	% of 9-1-1 Transports in the Service Area	Averaged Monthly ED Visits	Reported 2003 Annual ED Visits	% of ED visits in the Service Area	Number of Patients Seen per Treatment Bay (Annual)
ELASlar Community Hospital	12	32%	3072	31%	973	11673	16%	973
East Los Angeles Doctors Hospital	8	21%	2832	29%	1251	15012	21%	1877
White Memorial Medical Center	18	47%	4009	40%	3685	44225	62%	2457
TOTAL	38		9913		5909	70910		1866

<u>CONCLUSIONS:</u>		
Number of treatment bays with the closure of ELASlar's ED	26	32% decrease
Current number of patients per treatment bay	1866	
Estimated increase in patients per treatment with ELASlar's ED closes	2727	46% increase

With the exception of 9-1-1 data, all other numbers are self-reported by hospitals.